

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 10, 2019

The Honorable Kevin McAleenan
Acting Secretary
Department of Homeland Security
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Acting Secretary McAleenan:

We write to express deep concern over the worsening political, economic, and humanitarian crises in Venezuela. Venezuela is experiencing extraordinary conditions that prevent the safe return of many of the country's citizens.¹ Over 3.4 million Venezuelans have fled their homes to escape the growing humanitarian emergency.² Given the grave state of affairs, we strongly urge the immediate granting of temporary protected status ("TPS") to Venezuelan nationals currently in the United States.

Maduro's regime has plunged Venezuela into catastrophe. The poverty rate in Venezuela is soaring and the nation's health system is near collapse.³ Nearly a third of Venezuelan physicians have fled the country, and an astounding 79% of hospitals are experiencing shortages in supplies to assist the country's mounting medical needs.⁴ This dire situation is only exacerbated by massive food and water shortages – malnutrition is widespread, especially among children and pregnant women.⁵ Frequent nationwide blackouts contribute to the deterioration of already impoverished communities.⁶ These power outages, including one that left the entire country without electricity for six days, often leave millions without light, fuel, refrigeration, water, public transportation, or hospital systems.⁷ This is one of the worst humanitarian crises in the Western Hemisphere.

It is unclear what comes next for the country and government of Venezuela. What is clear, however, is that the United States must act to protect Venezuelans until they may safely return home. A TPS designation for Venezuelans currently residing in the U.S. would keep families from returning to a life-threatening situation within their home country – a situation that is worsening

¹ 8 U.S.C. § 1254a(b)(1)(C) (The Attorney General may designate temporary protected status to any foreign state if "the Attorney General finds that there exist extraordinary and temporary conditions in the foreign state that prevent aliens who are nationals of the state from returning to the state in safety....").

² *'Protracted crisis' in Venezuela leads to 'alarming escalation of tensions': UN political chief*, UN News (Feb. 26, 2019), <http://news.un.org/en/story/2019/02/1033612>.

³ *See Venezuela's Humanitarian Emergency: Large Scale UN Response Needed to Address Health and Food Crises*, Human Rights Watch & Johns Hopkins - Bloomberg School of Pub. Health (Apr. 2019).

⁴ *Id.* at 16.

⁵ *Id.* at 5, 26.

⁶ *See* Mary Beth Sheridan & Mariana Zuniga, *Rotting Food and Endangered Patients: How Venezuelans are Faring During Continuing Nationwide Power Outages*, WASH. POST, Mar. 10, 2019; Nicholas Casey, *Venezuela was Crumbling. A Blackout Tipped Parts of It into Anarchy*, N.Y. TIMES, Mar. 15, 2019.

⁷ *Id.*

each day. Indeed, the Venezuelan crisis is exactly the type of scenario for which the TPS statute was designed.


As a beacon of freedom and democracy within our global community, it is the duty of the United States to protect these vulnerable communities. We urge you to immediately designate TPS for Venezuelan nationals.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

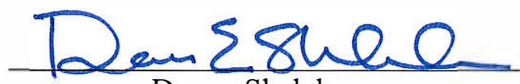
Sincerely,




Debbie Mucarsel-Powell
Member of Congress



Darren Soto
Member of Congress



Donna Shalala
Member of Congress



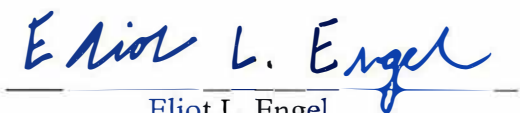
Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Member of Congress




Mario Diaz-Balart
Member of Congress



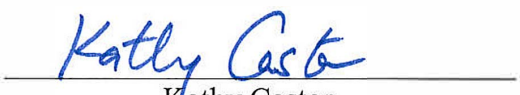
Ted Deutch
Member of Congress



Eliot L. Engel
Member of Congress




Joaquin Castro
Member of Congress



Kathy Castor
Member of Congress



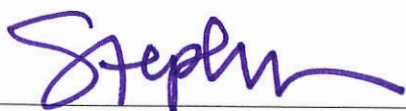
Alcee L. Hastings
Member of Congress


M.C.

Frederica S. Wilson
Member of Congress



Al Lawson
Member of Congress



Stephanie Murphy
Member of Congress



Lois Frankel
Member of Congress



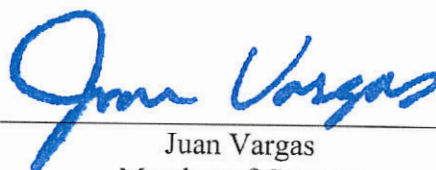
Michael Waltz
Member of Congress



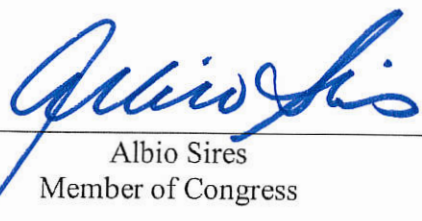
Adriano Espaillat
Member of Congress



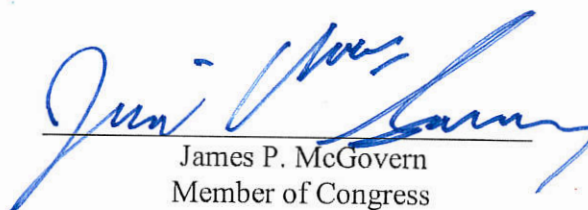
David Cicilline
Member of Congress



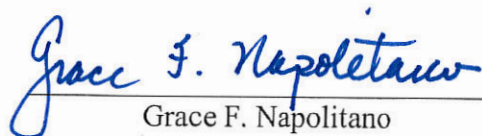
Juan Vargas
Member of Congress



Albio Sires
Member of Congress



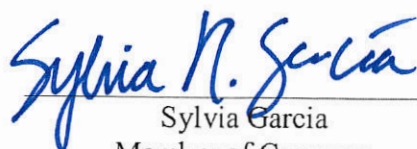
James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



Grace F. Napolitano
Member of Congress



Linda Sánchez
Member of Congress



Sylvia Garcia
Member of Congress